Procedure for Awarding Book stalls

4481. DR. ABRAR AHMED : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) what is the procedure adopted for awarding bookstalls at Railway Stations;

(b) whether Government propose to change the guidelines in this respect to include more categories of persons to be considered for the purpose;

(c) whether Government have discretionary powers to award such contracts, and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) Allotment of bookstalls is done by the zonal Railways after inviting applications from the eligible categories *viz.* unemployed graduates, their co-operatives, partnerships associations and co-operative societies of actual workers and vendors. Selection is made by a committee of officers as per prescribed procedure and guidelines. However in case of M/s A.H. Wheeler & Co. M/s. Higginbothams Ltd. and Philanthropic Societies Religious organisation allotment is done at the level of Railway Board on recommendation of zonal Railways.

(b) Yes. Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Checking and Testing Facilities for Imported Genetically Modified Food or Crops at Scientific Institutes

4482. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are not well equipped to detect or make risk assessment of genetically modified food or crops that many have been clandestinely imported within the country due to non-availability of data;

(b) whether the funds sanctioned for the upgradation of checking and testing facilities at various scientific institutes was not adequate to meet the current requirement of the Ministry; and

(c) if so, what are the facts of the case and the action taken to protect the health of our citizens from this problem ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT) : (a) to (c) The Department of Biotechnology along with Indian Council of Agricultural Research has established a National Containment cum-Quarantine Facility for testing transgenic planting material to be imported for research purposes. Research and development has also been taken up for development of analytical techniques for rapid detection of transgenic traits in GM foods and products derived therefrom in several institutions namely :

Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore; National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad; Industrial Toxicological Research Centre, Lucknow, Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics, Hyderabad and National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resource, New Delhi, and strengthening the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad for the establishment of national facility for evaluation of safety of GM foods. Adequate funding has been provided for this. Strengthening and upgradation wherever further needed will also be done at the port and in scientific institutions. The Government is not aware of clandestine import of genetically modified (GM) food or crops in the country. The import of genetically modified food or crops is done with the approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) of the Ministry of Environment & Forests, whose approval is mandatory before import of GM Food or crop. The GEAC has been set up under Rule 4 of the Rules for Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Genetically Engineered Organisms or cells, 1989 notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The Port Authorities have been notified on this requirement. Wherever any such cases are detected or there is a doubt, the matter is to be referred to the GEAC, which evaluates the food and health safety aspects prior to its import.

Assistance to Institute of Advanced Study in Science & Technology, Guwahati

4483. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government received a proposal during 2001 for fully funding the Institute of Advanced Study in Science & Technology, Guwahati; and